

ADJUSTING FAMILY LIFE ACCORDING TO PROVERBS

Note: Each of the first seven chapters has exhortations to a son – “my son”, and five of the seven begin with these words. A recurring theme is this father’s earnest appeal to his son to listen. This certainly applies to daughters as well.

Apart from Proverbs 31, the words to mothers and wives focus primarily on the problem of contentiousness and secondly on immorality.

The emphasis to fathers is the consistent discipline of children.

So a summary of the God-given emphases of Proverbs would be: *Children, listen! Women, do not be contentious! Fathers, correct your children!*

Words to children in green

Words to mothers and wives in pink

Words to fathers, husbands, and households (assumes that the man is primarily responsible for the family) in blue

HEED PARENTAL INSTRUCTION

Listen to and adhere to parental instruction.

1:8-9 Hear, my son, your father’s instruction And do not forsake your mother’s teaching;
9 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.

4:1-5 Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding,
2 For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction. 3 When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, 4 Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live; 5 Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

Obey parental commands, remembering the blessing of careful compliance.

6:20-24 My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; 21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life 24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

Do not stop listening to parental instruction and thus put yourself under misguided counsel.

19:27 Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.
Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from the words of knowledge.

Make your parents glad by giving your heart to them.

23:25-26 Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.
26 Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.

BE A WISE SON, WHO MAKES YOUR PARENTS GLAD.

Be a wise son, knowing the grief that foolishness causes.

10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

17:21 He who sires a fool *does so* to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy.

17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father And bitterness to her who bore him

Be a wise son who listens to your father’s rebuke and discipline.

13:1 A wise son *accepts his* father’s discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Be a wise son who respects (does not despise) your parents.

15:20 A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.

Do not be contentious – note that both the son and wife are causing disharmony.

19:13 A foolish son is destruction to his father, And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

Make your parents rejoice with wise, right speech

23:15-16 My son, if your heart is wise, My own heart also will be glad; 16 And my inmost being will rejoice When your lips speak what is right.

Appreciate the pleasantness of wisdom.

24: 13-14 My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; 14 Know *that* wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find *it*, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

Silence family critics with wise actions.

27:11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me.

FIND A WIFE AND VALUE HER.

18:22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD.

ALWAYS SHOW RESPECT TO AUTHORITY FIGURES, ESPECIALLY YOUR PARENTS.

Show great respect in the way you treat your parents.

19:26 He who assaults *his* father *and* drives *his* mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son.

Never talk back to parents, for serious disrespect brings severe judgment.

20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, **His lamp will go out in time of darkness.**

30:11 There is a kind of *man* who curses his father And does not bless his mother.

30:17 The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, **The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.**

Show respect by listening and maintain that respect through the parents' old age.

23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

BEWARE OF HAVING EVIL FRIENDS

Beware of the grave dangers of having evil friends.

23:19-21 Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way. **20** Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, *Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags.

Respect all authority figures and disassociate from rebels against authority.

24:21 My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change,
22 For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin *that comes* from both of them?

Avoid companions who are unruly and undisciplined.

28:7 He who keeps the law is a discerning son, But he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father.

Avoid the company of the immoral and spendthrift.

29:3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, But he who keeps company with harlots wastes *his* wealth.

Avoid women and wine.

31:1-5 The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him:
2 What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?
3 Do not give your strength to women, Or your ways to that which destroys kings.
4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink,
5 For they will drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

BEWARE OF WRONG ATTITUDES TO THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE.

3:11-12 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof,
12 For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

HANDLE MONEY WITH FORESIGHT AND INTEGRITY.

Shun anything that may lead to indebtedness for others.

6:1-3 My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have given a pledge for a stranger,
2 *If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth,
3 Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.

Prepare financially for marriage.

24:27 Prepare your work outside And make it ready for yourself in the field; Afterwards, then, build your house.

Never take financial advantage of parents.

28:24 He who robs his father or his mother And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.

BE PURE IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPOUSE

Remember that adultery violates earlier pledges both to God and your spouse.

2:16-17 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words
16 That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God.

Be faithful to your spouse during periods of absence.

7:18-19 "Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses.
19 "For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey;

BE A WOMAN OF EXCELLENCE IN CHARACTER

Be a woman of excellence; be your husband's crown.

12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames *him* is like rottenness in his bones.

31:10-31 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.

Excellence of character shows up in these areas: ability, valor, strength, might and riches (worth). The word "excellent" is translated in all of these ways.

According to Proverbs 31, the "excellent" (virtuous – KJV) woman has this character: she is trustworthy (11-12); she is a hard worker (working joyfully [13], diligently [14-15], profitably [16-18], skillfully [19], unselfishly [20], and effectively [21-24]); she is dignified [25a], joyfully optimistic [25b], wise [26a], kind [26b], conscientious [27a], and diligent [27b].

MAKE SURE WORDS AND ACTIONS ARE BUILDING YOUR HOME.

14:1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

BE SWEET AND AGREEABLE IN YOUR DISPOSITION.

Do not be contentious – note that both the son and wife are causing disharmony.

19:13 A foolish son is destruction to his father, And the **contentions** of a wife are a constant dripping.

Do not be contentious.

21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a **contentious** woman.
It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. (KJV)

25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a **contentious** woman.

27:15-16 A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike;
16 He who would restrain her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand.

Do not be an angry person.

21:19 *It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a **contentious** and an **angry** woman.
It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman. (KJV)*

Do not be unattractive in disposition, making yourself odious to your husband.

30:23 [The earth quakes] Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.
For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress. (KJV)

CORRECT YOUR SON IF YOU LOVE HIM.

Follow the divine pattern of discipline by showing joy with reproof.

3:11-12 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof,
12 For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

Show love with diligent discipline.

13:24 He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Discipline children using reproof.

15:5 A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is sensible.

Deal with foolishness using the rod for discipline.

22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Overcome hesitation to discipline by knowing the issues at stake.

23:13-14 Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die.
14 You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.

Chasten children early with confidence it is for their good.

19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.
Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. (KJV)

Couple the rod and reproof to raise a wise child.

29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Correct your child in order to have comfort and delight in him.

29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.

Prepare children for life with individualized attention.

22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

BE RIGHTEOUS IN ALL YOUR DEALINGS

Be righteous – conform to the biblical standard – in all things.

12:7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous will stand.

Be righteous for peace and prosperity.

15:6 Great wealth is *in* the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of the wicked.

Set an example of integrity before your children.

20:7 A righteous man who walks in his integrity— How blessed are his sons after him.

FOCUS YOUR HOME ON GODLINESS, NOT ON THE WORLD'S VALUES.

Strive to leave an inheritance (especially a good name) to several generations.

13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, And the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

Value godliness over gold.

15:16-17 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it.
17 Better is a dish of vegetables where love is Than a fattened ox *served* with hatred.

Appreciate the value of a harmonious, simple, quiet home.

17:1 Better *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife

Appreciate good family heritage.

17:6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

USE FORESIGHT AND MAINTENANCE (LOVE, PURITY) IN MARRIAGE.

Enjoy your spouse totally and avoid all others.

5:18-20 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 *As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.*

20 For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?

Thank God for a prudent wife.

19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

When looking for a wife, beware of one who is contentious and easily angry.

See verses above **21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16.**

Avoid immoral women, knowing the depth of the danger.

22:14 The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed of the LORD will fall into it.

BUILD A SOLID HOME AND MAINTAIN IT WELL.

Base your home on biblical wisdom and understanding.

24:3-4 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

Maintain family friendships.

27:10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.

VARIOUS ABOUT DUTIES AND CHARACTER IN THE HOME.

Express the Lord's hatred of strife among siblings.

6:16-19 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

.... A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Train children to work hard at the appropriate time.

10:5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, *But* he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

Be a calming, settling influence in the home.

11:29 He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, And the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted.

Be humble and attentive to the needy.

15:25 The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

Summary

1. Children are to listen. Synonymous terms are hear, do not forsake, give attention, do not abandon, hold fast, acquire, keep, do not forget, observe, bind, and accept.
CHILDREN, TAKE HEED TO WHAT YOUR PARENTS ARE TELLING YOU.
2. Women are to develop sweetness of disposition, avoiding being contentious. That is they are not to be argumentative, quarrelsome, nagging, critical, or judgmental. Note that the root of the Hebrew word for "contention" means to judge, to plead a cause, to execute judgment, to govern, to contend, to strive.
WOMEN, BE STRONG IN VIRTUE AND IN SWEETNESS.
3. Fathers are to discipline their children. Discipline includes the two main components of physical correction and oral instruction, which includes teaching, rebuke, and reproof. It is not so much teaching the academic facts as it is guiding and even effecting proper moral behavior.
FATHERS, DISCIPLINE DILIGENTLY AND LOVINGLY WITH A VIEW TO CHANGING THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR.